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Editorial: Theology and Philosophy

In all attempts to bring the light of Scripture to bear on the scholarly enterprise, the relation of theology and philosophy, and of these two to both Scripture and the other academic disciplines, has been a crucial and prominent question. In the reformational tradition of Christian scholarship, this problem has been dealt with in quite a unique way. Since philosophy has been conceived in this tradition as the encyclopedic science dealing thematically with the foundational issues of all the other sciences, and since theology has been viewed as correlative with these other "special" sciences, the center of gravity seems to have shifted from theology to philosophy as the crucial discipline in working out Scripturally-directed learning. In the view of many, philosophy appears to have usurped the place of theology as queen of the sciences. This impression is strengthened by the reformational insistence that philosophy does not work by "unaided reason," nor is it beholden to theology for Scriptural insight, but is free to draw directly on God's revelation in the Bible. This point has been made most forcefully by Dooyeweerd, the best known of the major reformational thinkers.

In my opinion it is time for a re-assessment of this question, not least because of the sometimes very palpable tension between philosophers and theologians, often of the same confessional persuasion, on account of this mixed question.

In the present issue of Anakainosis we are printing a short essay written by Dooyeweerd in 1928 on the question of nature and grace, certainly a "theological" question par excellence--at least in any traditional understanding of theology. He calls this question "the all-important fundamental problem" (het allesbeheersende grondprobleem) of Christianity. Moreover, he makes two further assumptions: (1) any philosophy which ignores this problem misses the point of Christianity altogether, and (2) the Calvinistic answer to the problem is the only satisfactory one.

The question which forces itself upon me is the following: does it make sense for Dooyeweerd to claim (as he undoubtedly would) that his philosophy is not dependent on a theological tradition on this point? Or, to anticipate the standard Dooyeweerdian reply: does it make sense to say that the Calvinistic understanding of the relationship of nature and grace (which is the intellectual cornerstone of the whole reformational enterprise) is not a matter of (scientific) theology, but of (pre-scientific) world and life view?

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Some Basic Semiotic Categories

by D.F.M. Strauss, D.J. van den Berg,

& A.J. Weideman

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

It is not necessary to give a survey of the problem of verbal and non-verbal signs in order to reach the conclusion that Western thought has traditionally assigned a position of priority to the language of words (verbal signs). Locke's approach to this problem provides a good example. When he discusses semiotics as "the doctrine of signs," he immediately adds a restriction about such signs, by remarking: "... the most usual thereof [are] words."¹ In modern linguistic science there is widespread recognition of the existence of semiotics. De Saussure, for example, anticipates the recognition of the special field of inquiry of semiology as a general science of signs. Though he considers linguistics (i.e. the theory of verbal language) to be only a branch of semiology, he nevertheless claims that the language of words is the most important of all sign systems. Recent terms, like para-linguistics, trans-linguistics and meta-linguistics, proposed by R. Barthes, amongst others,² emphasize the language of words to such an extent that semiotics again reverts to the position of a subdiscipline of linguistics.

However, this kind of problem is not indigenous to the disciplines of linguistics or semiotics. Several other special sciences similarly confuse the dimensions of things and functions (or entities and modal aspects). In jurisprudence, for example, there are strong tendencies to connect the juridical function solely with the state, and thus to recognize the legal character of constitutional law only. In aesthetics the dominant tradition since the nineteenth century only allows for works of art to have an aesthetic function. Even in theology, the universality of the confessional or certitudinal function of faith is often reduced to, and identified with, the nature of the institutional church. And in current historiography, the identification of the techno-formative modal aspect with the concrete events of history is almost self-evident.

2. THE DISTINCTION: MODALITY/ENTITY

In order to escape from this ubiquitous dilemma we should take into serious consideration the insights achieved by reformational philosophy into the fundamental difference between the two dimensions of modal aspects and entities. As universal modi, the aspects in which entities have concrete and individual functions serve simultaneously as points of entry for our analysis of any given entity. Or in a reversed formulation: all scientific disciplines must employ both point-of-entry concepts (concepts of function) and concepts of things (typical entity-structural concepts).

The universality of the juridical aspect, for example, implies that this modal aspect cannot be identified with any one entity--such as the

state--qualified by its typical functioning in this aspect, since many other entities also function in the juridical modal aspect. In this connection churches, marriages and businesses can be mentioned, i.e. the existence of internal ecclesiastical law, matrimonial law, and (commercial and corporate) business law. For semiotics and linguistics, this means that an identification of the modal sign function of reality with concrete verbal language will result in a theoretical confusion of the dimensions of modalities and entities. In practice the resulting primacy assigned to the language of words confounds the issue still further.

3. SEMIOTIC OR LINGUAL?

The universal modal structure of every aspect of reality displays a correlation of a law or norm side, and a factual subject and object side--all these moments being stamped by the unique, irreducible and indefinable nature of the aspect in question. The traditional indications of the sign aspect of reality probably latched on to these structural moments. Thus 'semiotic' appealed to the norm (or code) of signifying ('beteken'), 'semantic' appealed to that which is signified ('betekenis') or the factual object function, while the indication of this aspect as the modality of 'symbolic signification' ('betekening') latched on to the subjective lingual activities of human creatures. The confusing result of these valid insights was the interchangeable indication of the fundamental sign modus of our existence by the alternate terms: semiotic, semantic and lingual. Furthermore, these three terms formed the basis for alternately naming the scientific discipline that studies this modal aspect semiotics (or semiology), semantics or linguistics.

All three of these sciences of signs, with their conflicting theoretical interests, have traditionally disregarded the universality of the sign aspect, which can of course not be reduced to any one of the three structural moments on which they position themselves.

4. SIGNS

The meaning of the sign aspect is revealed only in the unbreakable coherence between signify as norm, signification as subjective activity, and the sign functions of entities that function objectively in this aspect. The different ways in which entities of various kinds function in this aspect, result in a similar diversity of typical specifications in the universal meaning of the sign aspect, and establish the possibilities for a theoretical classification of the diverse sign functions.

In principle all entities function either subjectively or objectively in all the modal aspects of reality, and thus every entity also has a specific sign function. All the multiple functions of an entity, including the sign function, are of course grouped and characterized by an entitary structure with a typical foundational function and a typical qualifying function.³

To account for the typical specifications given to the universal sign function by various kinds of entitary structures, semiotics tries to classify the kinds of entities and their typical sign functions. In terms of the sign function at least three basic categories can

be distinguished:

- A. The first category includes the sign functions of entities which have an objective-technical foundational function, and which are qualified by a sign function.
- B. The second category includes the sign functions of entities which are founded in an objective-technical function, but which, instead of the sign aspect, are qualified by diverse other modal aspects.
- C. The last category includes the sign functions of all entities lacking both an objective-technical foundational function and a qualifying sign function.

In order to honour the universality of the sign aspect, it should initially be sufficient to stick to examples of latent, objective sign functions, i.e., categories of the signifiability ('betekenbaarheid') of entities:

- A. Curiously enough it seems that there are no entities with exclusively latent, objective sign functions of the kind which can be classified in category A. However, when the latent, objective sign function of any entity is made patent by a distinctive second kind of entity, then this second kind of entity would, when considered on its own, have a latent, objective sign function belonging to category A. For example, an entity like a chair has a latent, objective sign function (of signifiability) that can be made patent in the name /chair/; the latter is a secondary kind of entity in distinction from the signified chair, and it has its own latent, objective sign function which can be made patent in its turn by synonymous names like /stool/ or /seat/, or by a diagrammatic representation of a chair.
- B. In this category one finds the sign functions of various man-made entities, such as the brand or trade-mark of manufactured goods, the badges, serial number and insignia of rank on a uniform, the emblems and icons in a painting, the photograph and vital statistics on a passport, the registration number of vehicles and guns, sacramental wine, bread and water, commemorative monuments and gravestones, engagement and wedding rings, geographical and statistical maps and charts, primitive mutilation and tattooing of the body, musical scores, catalogues, directories and dictionaries of various kinds, and so forth.⁴
- C. To this category belong the latent, objective sign functions of all entities and events which are not man-made, such as animal tracks, meteorological cloud formations, symptomatic colour, temperature and texture of the skin, the bee-dance phenomenon, scents, colours, tastes, sounds, etc.

5. TYPICAL SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE SIGN RELATIONS

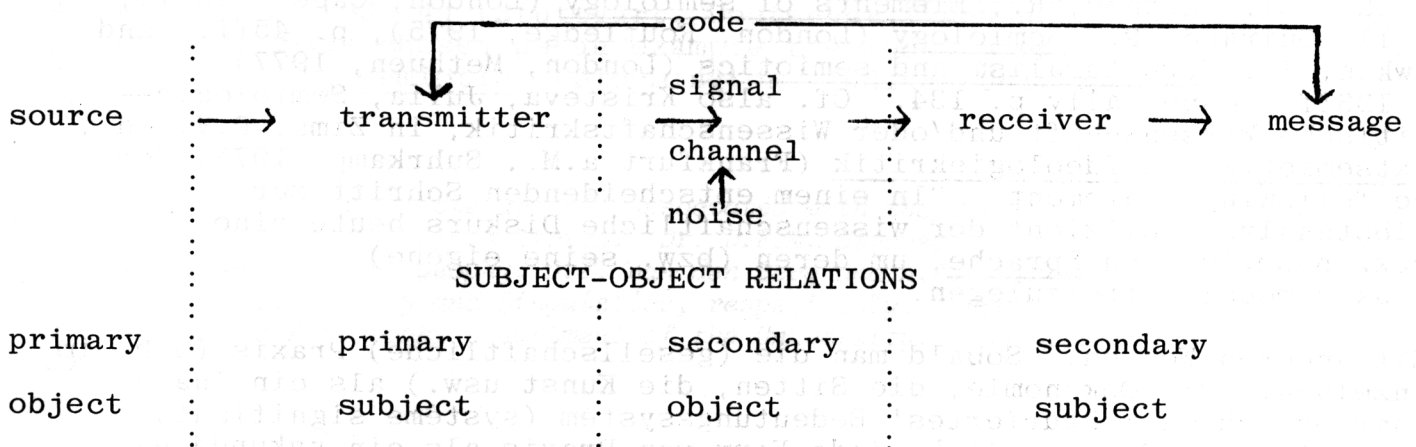
Attention must be given to the role of subject-object relations if we are to gain greater insight into the sign modus with its norms of signifying, its subjective activities of signification, as well as its objective sign functions of signifiability ('betekenbaarheid') and nuances of significance ('betekenismomente'). The relations between these normed subjective and objective sign functions are differentiated

in a typical fashion on the entitary horizon. In this differentiation we are confronted with the difference between latent and patent sign functions--the latter being disclosed by signifying subjects in secondary entities.

Objective-technically founded and encapsulated entities and events are secondary entities with patented sign functions. Examples of such patent, objective sign functions can be discovered in speech (as spoken verbal language), in texts (as written or printed manuscripts of various kinds), and in languages of gestures and codes. These secondary entities (and their patented sign functions) are always enkaptically interlaced with various contexts which are not qualified by sign functions.⁵ The resulting diversity of entitary kinds implies that we cannot uniformly experience 'language as such,' and that the actualizing subject⁶ must avail himself of exegesis, interpretation, translation and understanding, as studied theoretically in general hermeneutics.

The characteristic subject-object-object-subject relations which are foundational to all cultural activities of man, exist also as typically specified and differentiated sign relations. These relations have been discovered and attended to by information theories, communication theories and cybernetics, in spite of their operational, physical-technical reduction of the semiotic idea of communication. The current communication model that was constructed in these disciplines, reveals the following subject-object relations:

COMMUNICATION MODEL⁷



The primary object (or 'source') in fact indicates the latent, objective sign functions of both non-technically and technically founded entities and events. In entities or events that lack a technical foundation, the latent, objective sign function is synonymous with primary signifiability; in entities or events that are technically founded the latent, objective sign function corresponds with secondary signifiability. Thus the primary object includes both primary and secondary signifiability.

Apart from the correct distinction of primary and secondary subjects and objects in the communication model, a serious mistake is made by imputing that the primary object or 'source' is of an 'uncodified' or normatively unstructured nature. This mistaken conception can only be corrected when we take into account (i) that the factual, primary object is structured (this normative structure was the basis that made

possible the categorical classification of sign functions in paragraph 4 above), and (ii) that the primary and secondary signifiability of the primary object can only be made patent in a secondary object--or objective-technically founded entities with patented sign functions, encapsulated in enkaptic wholes not qualified by sign functions--in obedience to norms (i.e. morphemic, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic norms).

Thus significance ('betekenis') is not an arbitrary human creation, because it is the normed patenting or disclosure of normed, latent objective sign functions. This normed subjective signification is the performance of human creatures who function in the universal sign modus as signifier ('betekenaar' or 'transmitter' as primary subject) with a definite competence of a typically specified character (for example, as speaker or author in a particular context). According to its nature, a norm always allows the human subject the freedom of alternative applications (en- and decoding of langue, or positivization of norms). The idea of arbitrariness in signification detaches this freedom in the responsible formulation of norms, evident, amongst else, in the variety of historical sign systems, from the relatively constant and universal sign norms.

NOTES

1. Cf. his An essay concerning human understanding, Book IV, Chapter 21, Paragraph 4 (London, Fontana-edition, 1964, p. 443).

2. Cf. Barthes, R., Elements of semiology (London, Cape, 1967), p. 11, Guiraud, P., Semiology (London, Routledge, 1975), p. 45ff., and Hawkes, T., Structuralism and semiotics (London, Methuen, 1977), p. 123ff., especially p. 134. Cf. also Kristeva, Julia, Semiologie--kritische Wissenschaft und/oder Wissenschaftskritik, in Zima, P.V. ed., Textsemiotik als Ideologiekritik (Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 1977) for the following statement: "In einem entscheidenden Schritt zur Selbstanalyse vollzieht der wissenschaftliche Diskurs heute eine Rückwendung zu den Sprache, um deren (bzw. seine eigene) Strukturmodelle freizulegen.

"Mit anderen Worten: Sobald man die (gesellschaftliche) Praxis (d.h. im einzelnen: die Oekonomie, die Sitten, die Kunst usw.) als ein 'nach einer Sprache strukturiertes' Bedeutungssystem (système signifiant) betrachtet, wird es möglich, jede Form von Praxis als ein sekundäres Modell in Relation zur natürlichen Sprache wissenschaftlich zu untersuchen, insofern nämlich natürliche Sprache und soziale Praxis sich wechselseitig moderllieren lassen...

"Bereits die Definition dieser neuen Forschungsdisziplin führt hinein in ihre verzweigte Problematik. Nach Saussure, der den Begriff geprägt hat (Cours de linguistique générale, 1916), hätte Semiologie der Name einer umfassenden Wissenschaft von den Zeichen sein sollen, von der die Linguistik nur ein Teilgebiet gewesen wäre. Auf einer späteren Stufe der Reflexion gelangte man jedoch zu der Einsicht, dass der Zeichen-Gegenstand der Semiologie--welcher Art er auch sei (Geste, Laut, Bild usw.)--der Erkenntnis nur in seiner Vermittlung durch die Sprache gegeben ist. Das führte zu dem Schluss, dass die 'Linguistik weder ein besonders privilegiertes noch überhaupt ein Teilgebiet der allgemeinen Wissenschaft von den Zeichen ist, vielmehr ist die Semiologie ein Teilgebiet der Linguistik, ganz genau gesagt: der Bereich, in dem es um die grösseren

Bedeutungseinheiten des Diskurses geht." [This last quotation is from Barthes].

3. We reserve the term 'typical' for the indication of matters on the entitary horizon and the term 'modal' for the indication of the aspectual or functional horizon.

4. The examples of objective sign functions of entities belonging to this category can only be considered as latent in terms of verbal language, since in itself the techno-formative foundation already constitutes a form of sign patency. The distinction between primary and secondary signifiability that is introduced in the next paragraph will clear up this problem.

5. The various contexts or enkaptic interlacements of such secondary entities naturally find their qualifying functions amongst the typical human facets of reality. Broadly speaking, this makes it possible to experience, for example, certitudinal, juridical, social or aesthetic speech, texts and gestural language.

6. The actualizing subject will be identified as 'secondary subject' in the further differentiation of subject-object relations. The role of such secondary subjects is indispensable for the functioning of all secondary entities and events.

7. A variety of communication models has been constructed; cf. for example, Guiraud, P., Op. cit., p. 5, Hawkes, T., Op. cit., p. 83, and Gadamer, H.-G. and Vogler, P. eds., Kulturanthropologie (Neue Anthropologie, Bd. 4) (Stuttgart, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1973), p. 356. We have chosen as an example the model used by Umberto Eco in his A theory of semiotics (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 33.

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Editorial (Continued from page 1)

This is a question which deserves (renewed) debate. The readers of Anakainosis are hereby cordially invited to contribute to such a debate in the pages of this journal. (A.W.)

The Affluent Society Revisited

by John Tiemstra

I

There was not much about the commodity shortages of 1973-74 that neoclassical economists could find any comfort in. For many of them, the only consolation was that they could claim once again that Galbraith was wrong. Scarcity still exists. Resources are limited, and human wants, even upper-middle-class Western human wants, are unlimited. We live, not in an affluent society, but in a society straining to keep up with the demands of its constituents for more and more economic goodies. It was the old economics of utilitarian hedonism that best described the world of the '70's, or at least better described it than Galbraith.

Of course, Galbraith never claimed, even in 1958, that resources were anything but limited or that consumers were ready to stop expanding consumption. That would be an absurd caricature of his position. What he did claim was that by any reasonable standard human needs for privately produced goods were fulfilled far beyond the point of satiation for most of us Westerners, while simultaneously our needs for publicly-produced goods were going unfulfilled. And in the midst of the crisis, in late 1973, a year after the appearance of The Limits to Growth, Galbraith brought out his new book Economics and the Public Purpose. In it the old argument is not discarded, but refined. It is the planning system, the largest firms, that with the connivance of the government, overprovide us with automobiles, television sets, and perfectly uniform potato chips. The market system, the small firms, with the suffrance of the government, underprovide us with medical care, housing, public transport, and art. The book did not stir as much comment as the earlier ones, perhaps because after fifteen years it was too familiar a theme.

Many Christian economists find this line of thinking very attractive. The mandate humanity received from God was not to pursue our wants or the imperatives of technology wherever they took us. Rather it was to subdue and replenish the earth--to understand nature and use it to provide our needs while respecting it and preserving it as God's creation. The planning system provides high-technology goods with little relevance to human needs, while doing violence to nature. Many of the market-system and public-sector goods that seem to be in short supply have special relevance to true human needs, and at the same time are environmentally benign.

Galbraith has also pointed out from the beginning that it is the burgeoning production of the planning system that lulls us into the acceptance of the disgrace of poverty in the midst of affluent America. The political truce on inequality exists because conventional wisdom has part of the increased production "trickling down" to meet the needs of the poor. The planning system seems to need large pay differentials to maintain its hierarchical structure, and the weaker market segment of the economy cannot afford high wages. So we have a plausible theory not

only of why poverty exists, but why nothing is done about it. The elimination of poverty is the first requirement of Biblical Christian social justice, but it is the last priority of conventional economics.

II

Though it does not appear at first, Galbraith's theories and policies have a lot in common with the anti-growth literature exemplified by Limits. Galbraith hardly ever mentions exhaustible resources, and he certainly does not seem to believe in the kind of world-wide catastrophe predicted in Limits. He is opposed to growth in the planning system, not because it would lead to catastrophe, but because it does not serve human values. But he does share with the doomsday writers an "anti-growth" perspective.

Galbraith favors growth in the market system and the public sector, because he sees real human needs that could be served by products of those sectors. The doomsday literature also sees the need for growth in certain kinds of economic activities--activities that are not resource-intensive. This has been called "organic economic growth."

It seems to me that the kind of growth Galbraith favors because of his perceptions of human needs, and the kind of growth the doomsday writers favor because of their perceptions of limited resource availability, are really the same thing. Let us look at some particulars.

Services (as opposed to manufactures) are likely to be very important in organic economic growth, both because they are non-resource-intensive and because they are income-elastic in demand (demand grows faster than income). Although some services are provided by planning-system firms (think of Sears and McDonalds), many of them are provided by market-system firms and by government. We have already mentioned health care, local public transportation, and artistic activities as three areas where we could be very much better served than we are now. Recreational activities of a participatory sort should also be important here. These areas of small-firm and government activity could expand greatly without large growth in resource consumption, but at the same time greatly improving our quality of life.

As fuel becomes more scarce it will become more important that our stock of buildings be designed and constructed to save fuel. This could mean a large amount of turnover, remodelling, upgrading, and possibly expansion of the stock of buildings, particularly housing. Construction generally and housing especially are market-system activities with a very high level of government involvement. In this area, too, obvious social need and the scarcity of resources both argue for faster growth.

In a world of resource scarcity, conservation of the environment and of the stock of resources will be an important and growing activity. Conservation is inescapably a function of government. Private markets cannot put an appropriate valuation on the quality of the environment--it must be a collective decision. The capture of government agencies by planning-system firms has led to the present sorry state of the environment. We have seen in the last ten years a gradual turnaround of government policy in this area, but the conservation activities of the government must continue to grow if resources are to be preserved and the quality of life improved.

If the economy is to continue to grow and the quality of life to improve, technological change will be an important part of the process. Research and development efforts by large firms have often been directed toward product innovations that are irrelevant to human needs and profligate of natural resources, like those perfect potato chips. If research is to be directed toward social needs, it has to be socially controlled to some extent. The government already has a big role in research in medicine, agriculture, energy, and basic science. That role will have to expand to other areas of social need.

Government has been cutting back its support for education in recent years, but that policy should be reversed. If new technology is to help us conserve resources, and if we are to pay more attention to the arts, then we will need a more educated population than ever before. Education relies very heavily on government support, and that support will have to be strengthened in a resource-constrained economy.

Of course, resource-intensive goods, food and fuel, continue to be necessities of life even when they are very scarce and thus very expensive. Poor people spend a higher proportion of their income on those things than rich people do. Therefore, as the prices of resources rise, the real incomes of poor people will be eroded faster than the incomes of the rich. Left uncorrected, the poverty problem will be worse in a resource-poor economy than it is already. So if we are to have a just society come out of all this, the government must redouble its efforts to achieve distributional equity, by whatever means it has at its disposal. For the most part, this will continue to involve taxes and transfer payments. I will have something to say about employment policy later.

III

I have made a case for increased government direction of the economy. It is a case that I hope is even more persuasive, though perhaps not so elegantly stated, as Galbraith's. In 1958, in The Affluent Society, he was not very hopeful about the political prospects for implementing such a program. In the more recent book he finds more positive indications of the political mood. I would like to discuss some of the political factors that bear on this kind of policy.

The program that I have argued for is designed to promote economic growth, even with declining resources. As long as economic growth of some sort continues, the political temptation will remain to do nothing significant about poverty. The truce on inequality Galbraith talked of in 1958 may still be observed as the situation worsens.

The renaissance of conservative political ideology in the last few years seems to be due to the perceived failure of the social programs of the 'sixties.' The facts seem to be that progress was made on many of our big social problems, though to be sure a lot of money was spent and no complete, permanent solutions were found. I am sure that social problems will continue to prove resistant to such solutions, and so the public will continue to resist devoting increased effort to ameliorating those problems.

An economy with rising resource prices is inevitably going to suffer from inflation. For a whole host of reasons, inflation makes it difficult to attract people and capital to the public sector and the market system.

Small firms and governments find it hard to protect their workers and investors from inflation, while large firms have less difficulty. Inflation reduces confidence in government, and stiffens resistance to tax increases and costly environmental regulation. So the social balance problem is exacerbated by inflation.

In the 1973 book Galbraith cites some recent Congressional actions that indicate a growing Public Cognizance of the divergence of planning system interests and the public interest. It seems to me that events since then, particularly the election in 1976 of both a President and a Congress committed to an activist stance on some of these social issues, tends to confirm Galbraith's earlier optimism.

IV

There are a couple of loose ends to be tied up, having to do with price controls and employment policy.

The function of price controls in Galbraith's scheme is twofold: to control inflation and to check the power of planning-system firms. I believe it is nearly impossible to control inflation in an economy with important exhaustible resources. Equilibrium in the resource markets requires the real price to rise exponentially, as compound interest. If such increases are disallowed for the sake of controlling inflation, some sort of rationing scheme must be introduced. Frankly, I prefer inflation to rationing in this case, with the proviso that resource owners be properly taxed and the poor be properly provided for. So even Galbraithian price controls do not do the job on inflation under these circumstances, and we just may have to live with it. There remains a lot of research to be done on this issue.

I have left open the question of the use of price controls to limit monopoly power in the planning system. That is much too involved an issue to take up here.

Galbraith seems to have largely given up on the idea that full employment should be a major goal of economic policy. After all, if we suffer from too much output of certain kinds anyway, and if there is an appropriate amount of redistribution, why should we push people to work and produce more junk? As a Christian economist, I think it is important to part company with Galbraith here. The Cultural Mandate is a mandate to work, and time and time again the Bible, and Biblical Christianity, reaffirm the value of work to humankind, value beyond just the economic value of the output. Besides, I find it hard to imagine a society so perfect that there are no longer useful things we can do for each other. Such activities may not be economically remunerative, but that does not mean they have no value. We shall have to learn that the best thing about a job is not the paycheck. These days the Women's Movement, in particular, seems inclined to forget that. But in any case, full employment should be an important, if not overriding, policy objective, and the government should continue to devote considerable effort to manpower programs. Such programs are difficult to design properly, but with enough knowledge and imagination, it can be done.

This does not mean that the new ways of doing things will necessarily be less capital-intensive than the present techniques. It is a mistake often made by readers of Meadows, Schumacher, and Commoner that a less resource-intensive society will also be less capital-intensive. In fact,

per capita economic growth with declining resource inputs requires higher capital inputs. This is perfectly consistent. Insulating a house, building a railroad, using computers to control air conditioning, and building smaller, more efficient power stations, are all examples of substituting capital for energy resources. Quite a bit of the capital needed for these tasks must be government-owned. But these capital needs take away nothing from the need for full employment.

V

By now some of my more conservative brothers and sisters are thinking so loudly I can hear them, so I must say something about freedom.

The program I have advocated does not alter the economic involvement of the government in kind, but only in degree. I have not here advocated any change in the basic organization of the economy, or in the kinds of intervention in the economy that government should undertake. I have only suggested that some activities that have traditionally and properly taken place in the public sector should expand relative to certain private-sector activities. What I have described is still recognizably a "free-enterprise system."

But doesn't freedom decrease any time that government expands its activity, and hence leaves the citizen with less discretionary income? I suppose in a sense that's true. But the freedom to choose among various private economic goods strikes me as a very limited, restrictive, and almost trivial kind of freedom, especially in an affluent society. The freedom to worship, to speak, to write, to travel seem much more important to me than the freedom to choose between a Big Mac and a Whopper. The assertion that these freedoms are all of one substance, that they all stand or fall together, strikes me as incorrect. None of us has complete liberty, but only the most ardent anarchist would assert that the loss of freedom to do criminal acts impairs freedom of religion. Also, this line of thinking amounts to saying that wealth confers freedom, which I find to be a limiting and bizarre idea.

To be honest about it, the Bible does not say much about freedom, especially economic freedom of this special sort. The Bible seems to place a much higher value on justice in economic relations than on freedom. And the freedom the Bible does celebrate is a kind of freedom the world knows nothing of. It is freedom from materialism and all other false religions, freedom from want, from oppression, from injustice, and from sin. It is freedom not to do just anything I please, but to do the thing that is right. Liberty may often be a necessary condition for doing the right thing. But sometimes the only way to accomplish justice is to make a collective decision. If we are barred from a collective action which would accomplish the right, we are in that less free.

Of course, government is as capable of injustice and oppression as any other social institution. American liberal economists have a built-in tendency to forget that, and I have to pinch myself occasionally as a reminder. The call to Christian political action rests in part on the danger of the abuse of power. But in this free democratic country, at least, I think political action offers hope for a future much better than the modern doomsdayers foretell.

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The Problem of the Relationship of Nature and Grace in the Calvinistic law-idea.

by Herman Dooyeweerd

Preliminary note: In the 1920's, when Dooyeweerd was beginning his philosophical writings, he wrote a number of articles in which he stressed the Calvinistic roots of his thought, and was not reluctant to enter into some of the issues which had been debated by the theological tradition. Later, after his clashes with the theological faculty at the Free University, he became increasingly less willing to engage in theological debate, and in the fifties self-consciously dropped the adjective "Calvinistic" from his philosophy, preferring it to be known as simply "Christian." Whatever the pros and cons of this move may be (it is significant that Vollenhoven and Stoker never felt moved to follow him in this), it is clear from the following extract that there is a very intimate connection between the foundations of Dooyeweerd's philosophy and certain basic structural features of the Calvinist tradition: the positive appreciation of law, the unlimited extension of sin and grace, and the conception of salvation as re-creation.

Some of Dooyeweerd's terminology in this early essay may require explanation. By "law-idea" (wetsidee) he meant at that time the underlying paradigmatic structure (usually oriented to some notion of "law") of any system of thought. "World and life view" refers to a non-theoretical overall perspective, comparable to the technical sense of Weltanschauung in Neokantianism, which is distinct from both theology and philosophy (A.W.).

Just as the Christian law-idea differs toto coelo in its basic structure from the humanistic one, so its fundamental problem has also been framed completely differently. Whereas the fundamental problem of the humanistic law-idea is formulated in its insoluble form as the quest for the harmonious relationship between the science-ideal and the personality-ideal, the Christian law-idea has from the beginning put in the centre of its attention the relationship between nature and grace in God's cosmic plan.

Indeed, a law-idea which ignores this fundamental problem of the Christian world and life view, and has a completely diesseitig, an entirely "natural" orientation, as in the case of humanism, can make no claim to the title "Christian."

The Fall into sin and the redemption through Jesus Christ are facts of cosmic and universal significance; to exclude these all-important matters from the purview of one's philosophy, deigning to grant them at best a place in the science of theology, is to understand nothing of the very core of Christianity as world and life view.

Through Augustine's lex aeterna, the first universal and worked-out formulation of the Christian law-idea, there runs as a golden thread the Christian antithesis between civitas Dei and civitas terrena; in the Thomistic law-idea the natura praeambula gratiae constitutes a predominant element which cannot be eliminated.

As for Luther's world and life view, although it fails to bring the problem of nature and grace to a satisfactory solution, yet its personalistic and soteriological character takes its origin completely from the Christian concept of grace.

Is it possible, then, that the Calvinistic law-idea should be indifferent towards this all-important fundamental problem? Far from it! The agonizing tension between nature and grace has been resolved in this law-idea, not by the elimination of one of the two, but by a harmonious reconciliation. It is this which gives the Calvinistic world and life view its balanced and imposing character. Everything, even the apparently least significant of natural phenomena, is here viewed in the light of eternity.

Redemption has a cosmic meaning; it makes all things new. Regeneration embraces all of life; it is indifferent to nothing; everything is taken up into the service of God. This is the attitude to life which Max Weber and Troeltsch have called innerweltliche Ascese. The term is debatable, but there need be no objection to its meaning, if it is understood to signify that nothing has existence or value in itself, but that every creature stands in a profound dependency relationship to God.

Whence comes the marked orientation of Calvinism to the law? Whence comes the radical rejection of all subjectivism, whence the irreconcilable antithesis to all personalism and immanence thinking? It is the characteristic stamp of God's creational sovereignty, on the one hand, and the sense of sin's far-reaching destructive effects, on the other, which has cut off at the root every autonomy of the subject in the Calvinistic law-idea.

In the midst of all error, in the midst of all distortion by sin, the universal legislation of God abides as the only constant, like a rock amidst the waves. In every law-sphere the holy, almighty and sovereign will of God the Creator holds sway immediately, without Vermittlung, without mediation of other laws. In every area grace impels toward loving submission to God's laws; it changes servitude to sonship.

But that grace is exclusively God's work and is not subjected to laws. Religion in its active sense is not one law-sphere alongside others, such as those of jurisprudence, morality and Logos, since in an entirely primary and universal sense it is foundational to all law-spheres. It is this as a passive bond to God's creative and sustaining power, insofar as we look to the law-spheres in which irrational nature serves God, and as active bond to God, insofar as we look to those law-spheres in which rational nature serves God.

Sin ruptured the active religious bond and plunged man into apostasy from the law and into a state of enmity to God and deep moral ruin. But that bond was restored by the cross of Christ, and redemption manifested its universal regenerating power everywhere that this religious attitude to life, made possible only in Christ, was adopted once again. In every area of life God's creature submitted himself once more in loving

obedience to God's ordinances, not as a slave under his Master, but as a child of the Father who is in heaven.

God's work in man's heart is not subject to laws. For that very reason the Christian religion cannot be enclosed in a single law-sphere, but impels the regenerated person out into the sinful world, in order to do battle everywhere for the recognition of the divine ordinances and against the abstraction disease of the humanistic science-ideal. It impels us to point out again and again the organic unity of all law-spheres, as this is expressed in our law-idea.

Nature and grace! How is their relationship viewed in our law-idea? Not nature as a preliminary to grace as in Roman Catholicism--no pagan foundation under a Christian roof. No unreconciled break between nature and grace, as in Lutheranism, but nature and grace in indissoluble, harmonious connection!

True nature is the obedience to God's law, in accordance with the meaning of the law, i.e. out of childlike love to the Father. And it is the grace in Christ Jesus which restores true nature in the creature. The operation of God's grace does not mean a new legislation, nor the establishment of a separate law-sphere, but a divine operation in the human heart which in Christ Jesus redirects all of life internally to the law. He who points only to the impassable boundary between God and creation isolates the law from religion, in which God enters into the most intimate fellowship with his creature, and in which he has been pleased to reveal himself to us.

By his common grace God has restrained the destructive effects of sin throughout the world; he has restrained the complete demonization of what he had created. In this way it was possible for science, art, society, jurisprudence and statecraft to continue to exist in the domain of common grace. But God's special grace also has its effect in this domain, making for division and separation between Christianity and humanism. The irreconcilable antithesis in the basic structure of the Christian and humanistic law-idea, or (to use the language of Augustine) the struggle throughout the ages between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness, between civitas Dei and civitas terrena, will not come to an end before the consummation of all things. Then God the Judge will speak the last word, and the time of common grace will come to an end.

Science and religion are no longer opposites in the light of the Calvinistic law-idea. For behold, science is religion (Godsdienst) in Christ Jesus, just as life in every law-sphere is equally service of God (dienst van God) in him who has prepared for us an eternal redemption from the power of sin, which is rebellion against God and his law.

--*Excursus II in the article "The problem of juridical causality in the light of the law-idea," Antirevolutionaire Staatskunde, Driemaandelijksch Orgaan 2 (1928)25-28.*

Personalism and Ethics

by A. Troost

The I-Thou Relation

Last year, when Martin Buber died, the current predominance of personalism was very evident. Everywhere in the press we could read highly appreciative words about Buber, also by orthodox Protestant theologians. Of course I do not wish to be grudging in my expression of appreciation for this great scholar, from whom I too have learned a great deal. But I was struck by the fact that, whatever other critical comments were made about his work, no one to my knowledge so much raised the question of his personalistic thought pattern. On the contrary, many see precisely this as one of his great contributions. People refer to his well-known book I and Thou in this connection, and praise the "I-Thou relation" as a Christian's philosophical notion par excellence. This is associated with words like communication, responsibility, existential love, personal openness to one another, etc.

Now there is much in Buber that we can admire and genuinely appreciate, but in my opinion it is precisely his characteristically personalistic notion of the I-Thou relation which we must reject.

The reason is that we here touch upon the fundamental questions of philosophy, and at a point where Buber, in our opinion, is in error. It concerns the relation of person and law. Allow me to introduce the few remarks which I would like to make on this subject with a quotation from an article by Professor G.C. Berkouwer, which appeared in Het Gereformeerd Weekblad (The Reformed Weekly) on December 31, 1965. (The emphases, too, are Berkouwer's):

In that connection I mentioned [in an earlier article] the concept of Law, which is also affected by these crises. "This law is then always interpreted as that which is static and immobile, which is no longer appropriate for the dynamic and living features of the human person." I spoke of a tension "between the human person and the acknowledgment of normative structures of reality," leading to an opposition between justice and love, between law and faith, as a personalization of reality, as subjectivism.

Berkouwer is here referring back to another article by him which appeared in the daily Trouw (of January 28, 1956) from which I take the following quote:

It can even be said that the real problem of personalism comes into view at this point, namely when a tension arises between the "person" which is stressed so much, and his surrounding reality with its "objective" and "lawful" structures.

In Berkouwer's view it constituted a devaluation of reality when the inner core of one's existence is emphasized to such an extent that reality is taken note of chiefly in terms of its intractability.

Normative Structures

It will come as no surprise to anyone if we assert that these reflections are of the greatest significance for ethics, including social ethics. It is precisely in ethics that we are concerned, among other things, with what Berkouwer called the "acknowledgement of the normative structures of reality." For it is simply a fact that in the everyday and practical actions of our lives we live within these structures. But there appears to be hardly any subject about which there is more misunderstanding and unclarity than this one. In the present theological climate it is therefore rather unfashionable to concern oneself with the study of these "normative structures," in view of the fact that many deny the existence of such normative structures, at least insofar as the term "normative" has some reference to the will of God.

As is usually the case, the particular intellectual aberration of our times is partially due to a reaction against previous aberrations. It is understandable, given the theories of natural law which have been put forward in the course of the centuries, that there should be a dialectical movement of thought to the other extreme. The same can be said of the various theologies of creation ordinances which have been developed especially in the Neolutheranism of this century. These endeavoured (quite rightly, in my opinion) to salvage the elements of truth in the conceptions of natural law, but they were unable to escape from the philosophical dilemmas which continued to be presupposed in the various theories of natural law.

In the philosophy of the cosmonomic idea an attempt has been made, on the basis of a completely new, and I am convinced biblical view of man and the reality of which he is part, to avoid the fundamental errors which underlie both the Christian conceptions of natural law and the theologies of creation ordinances. But these fundamental errors are not to be found where they are usually sought, that is, in the acknowledgement of a created world order and of the normative structures of reality implied in such an order. They are rather to be found in the philosophical constructions which have been associated with this acknowledgement. That in turn had its roots in the influence which non-Christian religions and philosophical traditions have exercised, and continue to exercise, on the thought of many Christians, and of many theologians.

The above is taken from an article which appeared in Mededelingen van de Vereniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte (Communications of the Association for Calvinistic Philosophy), March, 1966. Dr. A. Troost is Professor of Social Ethics at the Free University of Amsterdam.

Puritanism on Authority

by Roy Clouser

The main consequence of the biblical teaching for this matter of authority is that God is the source of all earthly authority, so that no person, group, or institution on earth can be the source or creator of authority. Moreover, there is nothing in the Bible to support the claim that any one person or institution--including the church--is the sole conduit of God's authority into human society. There is, on the contrary, much to warrant the interpretation that authority is diffused in human life so that there is no single central form of it; that on earth there is no supreme authority, but only different kinds of authorities.

I believe Calvin saw this point very clearly when he took the position that in virtue of the way God had made the world and human beings, there are different modes or spheres of authority in life, no one of which may trespass onto another's territory. For example, he says in the Institutes:

Therefore, lest all things should be thrown into confusion by our own folly and rashness, (God) has assigned distinct duties to each in the different modes of life. And so that no one may presume to overstep his limits, (God) has distinguished the different modes of life by the name of callings. Every man's mode of life, therefore, is a kind of station assigned to him by the Lord...only he who directs his life to this end will have it properly framed; because free from the impulse of rashness he will not attempt more than his calling justifies knowing that it is unlawful to overlap the prescribed bounds. He who is obscure will not decline to lead a private life that he may not desert the post at which God has placed him...the magistrate will more willingly perform his office, and the father of a family confine himself to his proper sphere...and no work will be so mean and sordid as not to have splendor in the eye of God. (Institutes III, X)

It is an easy matter to contrast this position with all those which put the source of authority in some principle other than the transcendent Creator of the Bible. Various theories have advocated that the ground of authority was to be located in military force ("might makes right"); or in economic ownership, or in a biologically inherited majesty. It has also been regarded as residing in human intelligence and virtue, as it was by Aristotle who advocated democracy on the ground that the mass of people would collectively have more wisdom and virtue than any smaller group no matter how bright its members. Significantly too, Aristotle saw the authority of the majority-ruled state as all-encompassing. He did not entertain for a moment the biblical notion that authority is pluriform so that no one kind is supreme over all other spheres of life.

Let me emphasize in this connection that the pluriformity which Calvin envisioned here, and which Kuyper developed in his theory of sphere sovereignty, is a qualitative pluralism of authority. It does not mean

merely that political authority should be divided as we have done by dividing the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government. Rather it means that there are non-political authorities such as that in family, church, business, or school which lie outside the proper sphere of the State altogether.

Now, I contend that if we look at the Puritan party platform in the light of this contrast, we find there a complex amalgam of Calvin and Aristotle. For instance, when the secretary of state of the Puritan government, John Milton, wrote his Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes in 1659, he clearly argued for pluriform authority between church and state. The authority of each is different, Milton argues, and neither should interfere with the other. Here he is on wholly Calvinist territory. But even earlier he had already written an essay called The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (1649). In this Milton was concerned to defend the right of the Puritans to depose King Charles I. Here we find him appealing to the Protestant Reformers to the effect that the king as well as the people are under the laws of God: if the people are wicked the King must punish them, while if the King is wicked he must be punished by the people. In support of this Milton quotes Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Bucer, Goodman, and many others.

So far so good. But we can also detect in this essay a failure to distinguish between the people having the right to choose and depose those who hold an office, and the people being the creators of the authority of office. For instance, Milton says that the right to depose the King is not simply that he had done what Calvin called "overleaped his prescribed bounds," but that the King "holds his authority from the people." And at the same time we find the House of Commons declaring that "the people are, under God, the source of all just power." What I find here is that early in the Puritan movement there was an unstable mixture of the ideal of democracy based on the belief in human intelligence and the virtue as the source of authority, and the ideal of rights based on the biblical (Calvinist) belief in God as the sole supreme authority and hence in the pluriformity and limitation of each kind of earthly authority.

The above is an extract from a speech entitled "The religious roots of two American political ideas." Dr. Roy Clouser teaches Philosophy at Trenton State College, Trenton, New Jersey, 08625, U.S.A.

News Items.

- * At the Social Sciences Seminar held at the Institute for Christian Studies last summer in Toronto, the plan was formed to start a "Sociology Newsletter" for reformationally-minded scholars. The first issue of this newsletter has now appeared, under the joint editorship of D.F.M. Strauss (Bloemfontein, South Africa) and Perry Recker (Pittsburgh, U.S.A.). It contains a list of publications by British Christian sociologist Dr. David Lyon, and an article entitled "Consensus and Conflict--Analyzed in terms of a few elementary basic concepts of sociology" by D.F.M. Strauss (9 pages). The addresses of the editors are: D.F.M. Strauss, Dept. of Philosophy, University of the Orange Free

State, P. O. Box 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa, and Perry Recker, Christian Educational Services, P. O. Box 307, Chatham College, Pittsburgh, PA 15232, U.S.A.

- * The Sociology Newsletter contains news of a significant publication by David Lyon: Karl Marx: Flowers, Chains and Freedom: A Christian appreciation of Marx (Lion Publishing, U.K., 1979)
- * C.T. McIntire, Senior Member in history and historiography at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, has edited a volume of essays by British Christian historian Herbert Butterfield, under the title: Herbert Butterfield: Writings on Christianity and History (Oxford University Press, 1979). McIntire has also contributed a 43-page essay entitled "Introduction: Herbert Butterfield on Christianity and History" which provides some materials for an intellectual biography of Butterfield, based on private interviews and access to his personal papers. McIntire at present plans to write a book about Butterfield as Christian historian. (At the time of writing, the news from Britain was that Butterfield, who is 79 and has been in frail health for some time, was seriously ill).
- * Friends of the Dutch Christian economist Goudzwaard have been shocked by the recent news of a serious car accident suffered by Bob's wife Rini. The family's plans to spend a year in Toronto, where Bob was to teach Economics at the Institute for Christian Studies, have had to be cancelled on this account.
- * As announced earlier, Dr. Peter Schouls' book, The Imposition of Method, a study of the philosophy of Descartes and Locke, will be the point of departure for a conference on the philosophy of method and modern science to be held in Toronto in August. The publication date of Schouls' book (to be published by Oxford University Press) is now projected to be Fall, 1979.
- * The summer seminar to discuss Dr. Peter Schouls' book, The Imposition of Method (see above), will be held at the Institute for Christian Studies August 6 through 10, 1979. The title of the seminar is "Descartes/Locke and Modern Science." Eight addresses will be given during the 5 days. The speakers and respective respondents are: Hendrik Hart, Institute for Christian Studies, Senior Member/Albert Wolters, Institute for Christian Studies, Senior Member; Peter Schouls, University of Alberta/Peter De Vos, Calvin College; Roy Clouser, Trenton State College/Ed Echeverria, Free University; Peter Schouls/James Skillen, Dordt College; Peter Schouls/John Vander Stelt, Dordt College; Arie Leegwater, Calvin College/Ken Piers, Calvin College; and Nick Wolterstorff, Calvin College/Johan Vander Hoeven, Free University, Amsterdam.